

Message Text

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PAGE 01 CANBER 00992 130543Z

21

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07

L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

OMB-01 AID-05 /070 W
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R 130446Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5050

INFO AMEMBASSY SAIGON

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L CANBERRA 0992

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: VN, AS, PINT, PDIP, PFOR

SUBJECT: PRIME MINISTER WHITLAM'S VIEWS ON VIET-NAM (CONTD.)

REF: A) CANBERRA 886; B) CANBERRA 929

1. DURING QUESTION TIME IN PARLIAMENT FEB 12 PRIME MINISTER WHITLAM WAS ASKED BY COUNTRY PARTY MEMBER IF AUSTRALIAN EM-BASSY SAIGON COULD CONFIRM THAT 28,000 GVN SOLDIERS HAD BEEN KILLED SINCE PARIS ACCORDS AND THAT NORTH VIETNAMESE FORCES IN SVN NOW ESTIMATED AT ABOUT 300,000. WHITLAM WAS ALSO ASKED IF AUSTRALIA TAKING ANY ACTION, FOR INSTANCE IN UN, TO ENFORCE PARIS AGREEMENTS.

2. IN REPLY, WHITLAM SAID QTE AUSTRALIA IS NOT A PARTY TO THE PARIS AGREEMENTS. THE PARIS AGREEMENTS DO NOT FALL WITHIN THE JURISDICTION OF THE UNITED NATIONS. IT IS UNFORTUNATE THAT THE PARTIES IN SOUTH VIETNAM TO THE PARIS AGREEMENTS HAVE MADE SO LITTLE ATTEMPT TO MAKE THEM WORK. I DO NOT KNOW THE CASUALTY FIGURES, BUT IT IS QUITE CLEAR THAT THE SUPPLIES GOING INTO VIETNAM FROM THE GREAT POWERS ARE STILL VOLUMINOUS. I WOULD IMAGINE THAT THEY ARE VERY MUCH GREATER TO SOUTH VIETNAM
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PAGE 02 CANBER 00992 130543Z

THAN TO NORTH VIETNAM. WE HAVE MADE IT QUITE PLAIN TO THE

THIEU REGIME THAT IT SHOULD DO MORE TO CARRY OUT THE PARIS AGREEMENTS, WHICH ARE NOW OVER TWO YEARS OLD. END QTE.

3. COMMENT: EMBASSY IS NOT SEEKING TO DOCUMENT EXTENT OF WHITLAM'S IGNORANCE ON SITUATION IN VIET-NAM, WHICH IS OBVIOUSLY CONSIDERABLE. WHITLAM'S ANSWER TO QUESTION ABOVE WAS NO DOUBT INFLUENCED IN PART BY HIS DEEP SCORN FOR OPPOSITION (HE REFERRED TO THEM COLLECTIVELY AT RECENT LABOR CONFERENCE AS QTE CONTEMPTIBLE RABBLE END QTE) AND BY STRUCTURE OF HOSTILITY BUILT INTO QUESTION PERIOD.

4. IT HAS BEEN APPARENT TO EMBASSY FOR SOME TIME THAT WHITLAM HAS BEEN INADEQUATELY BRIEFED ON SITUATION IN SVN BY HIS OWN DEPARTMENTS, DESPITE THE VERY SUBSTANTIAL AND DETAILED INTELLIGENCE WE REGULARLY PROVIDE GOA UNDER LONG-STANDING PROGRAMS. NOR DOES WHITLAM SEEM TO READ EVEN AUSTRALIAN DAILY PRESS ON SITUATION IN SVN. MELBOURNE AGE AND SYDNEY MORNING HERALD FEB 13 CARRY REPORT FROM SAIGON CORRESPONDENT MICHAEL RICHARDSON, REFERRING TO INFILTRATION OF OVER 60,000 NVA TROOPS SINCE DEC, 1974.

5. ACTION RECOMMENDED: BELIEVE THERE WOULD BE UTILITY IN DEPARTMENT'S CALLING IN AMBASSADOR SHAW, NOTING WHITLAM STATEMENT IN PARLIAMENT FEB 12 (ABOVE), AND GIVING HIM BRIEF REVIEW SINCE PARIS ACCORDS SIGNED OF COMPARATIVE INPUTS OF TROOPS, SUPPLIES, AND EQUIPMENT BY U.S. TO GVN, AS OPPOSED TO NORTH VIET-NAM TO COMMUNIST FORCES IN SV., DEPT MIGHT ASK SHAW IN PARTICULAR TO BRING SUCH BRIEF, PUNCHY STATEMENT TO ATTENTION OF PRIME MINISTER. WHITLAM MIGHT VERY WELL READ IT, COMING FROM AMBASSADOR SHAW. HARROP

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